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FROM THE DIARY OF
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" 9 " January 1970
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MEMORANDUM ON THE CONVERSATION
with the DRV Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nguyen Ko Tkhat'

[stamp] Without right of publication

3 January 1970

I met with Nguyen Ko Tkhat' at his invitation. Present at the meeting was the VNA Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Fung Tkhe Taj, who, referring to his instructions, reported that the Vietnamese side has studied the issue of DRV Prime Minister Pham Van Dong's forthcoming trip to Cambodia. He said that, in our opinion, it is expedient to choose a sea route. A Soviet vessel, which should be ready to set sail on 20 January, will cover a distance of approximately 1200 miles, traveling 80 to 100 miles from the coast of Vietnam. Fung Tkhe Taj requested that, in addition, he be informed of the vessel's speed and name. The Vietnamese side also requested that a special Soviet aircraft be sent to Hanoi. In an effort to preserve the trip's secret nature, it is necessary to calculate the aircraft's flight from Hanoi to Phnom Phen so that it arrives simultaneously with Pham Van Dong, who will proceed to Phnom Phen in an automobile from Sianukvil' [Sihanoukville?]. The senior colonel added that a meeting for the DRV Prime Minister will be arranged at the airfield in Phnom Phen. The Soviet side will select the aircraft's flight route from Hanoi to Phnom Phen.

I promised to inform Moscow.

Furthermore, Nguyen Ko Tkhat' expressed the TsK PTV's and DRV Government's gratitude to the TsK KPSS and Soviet Government for supporting the Vietnamese side's position on the American POW issue, in both the UN and at the international conference of the Red Cross Society in Istanbul. Then, recalling our request to clarify the DRV position on this issue, he reported that the American imperialists are experiencing confusion relative to the war in Vietnam. The peoples of the world are more decisively condemning the crimes of the American war machine in South Vietnam, especially in the village of Songmi; they demand putting an end to the aggressive war and pulling out of South Vietnam all American troops and troops of U.S. satellites. The American imperialists are trying to use

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the prisoner issue in order to confuse world society and, incontrovertibly, they will create tension surrounding this issue for a long time to come. Having then turned attention to the reservation to Article 85 made by the DRV Government upon joining the Geneva Convention of 1949, Tkhat' said that the DRV is firmly resolved to continue the line that captured American pilots are not prisoners and must be punished as military criminals: they are not subject to protection under the Geneva Convention. However, a humane and lenient policy is in effect in dealing with prisoner American pilots: the sick and wounded receive medical attention, prisoners are fed on the same level as VNA soldiers, once a month they are allowed to send postcards to their relatives and once every two months they are allowed to receive a package. Tkhat' noted that although there is no published lists of imprisoned pilots, the Americans know that prisoners are permitted to carry on correspondence.

Answering the question we posed earlier, Nguyen Ko Tkhat' reported that the delegation of American women who recently visited the DRV were given over 100 postcards and were told the names of 5 Americans who died in captivity. Nguyen Ko Tkhat' then said that the Vietnamese side is in favor of resolving the American POW issue in accordance with Point 9 of the ten-point "Global Resolution of the South Vietnamese Problem" proposed by the NFOYuV [National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam]. In accordance with this [point], the battle to uncover crimes of American imperialism against the Vietnamese people will be reinforced, and due attention will be paid to clarifying the policy in respect to American prisoners. Tkhat' said that, in this connection, we are appealing to the Soviet Union and to other socialist countries with a request for assistance and support for our position. He continued by saying that since the U.S. is presently attempting to distort the resolution of the Red Cross' international conference in Istanbul, it would be desirable if, along with the statements in the press, the Soviet Red Cross made a suitable statement or sent a letter to the DRV Red Cross supporting the memorandum sent by the Vietnamese side to the Istanbul conference. It would also be desirable if the Soviet Union worked accordingly with other countries.

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Nguyen Ko Tkhat' then reported that American millionaire Perot appealed to the DRV chargé d'affaires ad interim in Vietnam with the proposal to rebuild North Vietnamese hospitals, schools and temples, which were destroyed by bombers, in exchange for the release of American POWs. In its answer, according to the Deputy Minister, the Vietnamese side did not reject, in principal, the proposals put forward; however, the necessity to resolve the matter in accordance with Point 9 of the "Global Resolution" was pointed out. Perot's proposal to send gifts to Vietnamese children was rejected as unacceptable.

I thanked him for this clarification and said that our friends' desires will be passed on to Moscow. I declared that the Soviet press will henceforth, as before, speak on these issues in the spirit of our joint position.

Referring to my instructions, I requested that Comrades Ton Dyk Tkhang, Le Zuan, Chyong Tin', and Pham Van Dong be informed of the gratitude of Comrades L.I. Brezhnev, N.V. Podgornyj and A.N. Kosygin for their condolences on the demise of K.E. Voroshilov.

Present at the meeting were the official consultant [referent] of the Office [referentura] on the USSR, MID DRV Dyk Lan and Attache of the USSR Embassy in the DRV V.P. Kyz'minov.

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR IN THE DRV [signature]

(I. SHCHERBAKOV)

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1 - OYuVA

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[TFR 235-4]

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[Photo of valve regulating jet-type aircraft anti-G suit]

General view of a captured automatic pressure-regulating device for an anti-G suit. Photo 1952.